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THE LAY-MAN'S MAGAZINE.

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND—AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

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THE YOUNG COTTAGER.

*By the author of the
DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER.*

PART IV.

I WAS so much affected with my last visit to little Jane, and particularly with her tender anxiety respecting the Lord's Supper, that it formed the chief subject of my thoughts for the remainder of the day.

I rode in the afternoon to a favourite spot, where I sometimes indulged in solitary meditation; and where I wished to reflect on the interesting case of my little disciple.

It was a place well suited to such a purpose.

In the widely sweeping curve of a beautiful bay, there is a kind of chasm or opening in one of the lofty cliffs which bound it. This produces a very romantic and striking effect. The steep descending sides of this opening in the cliff are covered with trees, bushes, wild flowers, fern, wormwood, and many other herbs, here and there contrasted with bold masses of rock or brown earth.

In the higher and middle parts of one of these declivities two or three picturesque cottages are fixed, and seem half suspended in the air.

From the upper extremity of this great chine, or opening in the cliff, a small stream of water enters by a cascade, flows through the bottom, winding in a varied course of about a quarter of a mile in length; and then runs into the sea across a smooth expanse of firm hard sand, at the lower extremity of the chasm. At this point,

the sides of the woody banks are very lofty, and to a spectator from the bottom, exhibit a mixture of the grand and beautiful, not often exceeded.

Near the mouth of this opening was a little hollow recess, or cave, in the cliff, from whence, on one hand, I could see the above described romantic scene; on the other a long train of perpendicular cliffs, terminating in a bold and wild shaped promontory, which closed the bay at one end, while a conspicuous white cliff stood directly opposite, about four miles distant, at the farther point of the bay.

The shore between the different cliffs and the edge of the waves, was in some parts covered with stones and shingle, in some with firm sand, and in others with irregular heaps of little rocks fringed with sea-weed, and ornamented with small yellow shells.

The cliffs themselves were diversified with strata of various coloured earths, black, yellow, brown, and orange. The effects of iron ore producing very manifest changes of hue, were every where seen in trickling drops and streamlets down the sides.

The huts in which the fishermen kept their baskets, nets, boats, and other implements, occupied a few retired spots on the shore.

The open sea, in full magnificence, filled the centre of the prospect; bounded, indeed, in one small part, by a very distant shore, on the rising ascent from which the rays of the sun rendered visible a cathedral church, with its towering spire, at above twenty miles distance. Every where else, the sea beyond was limited only by the sky.

A frigate was standing into the bay

not very far from my recess ; other vessels, of every size, sailing in many directions, varied the scene, and furnished matter for a thousand sources of contemplation.

At my feet the little rivulet, gently rippling over pebbles, soon mingled with the sand, and was lost in the waters of the mighty ocean. The murmuring of the waves, as the tide ebb'd or flow'd, on the sand ; their dashing against some more distant rocks, which were covered fantastically with sea weed and shells ; sea-birds floating in the air aloft, or occasionally screaming from their holes in the cliffs ; the hum of human voices in the ships and boats borne along the water ; all these sounds served to promote, rather than interrupt, meditation. They were soothingly blended together, and entered the ear in a kind of natural harmony.

In the quiet enjoyment of a scene like this, the lover of nature's beauties will easily find scope for spiritual illustration.

Here I sat and mused over the interesting character and circumstances of little Jane. Here I prayed that God would effectually teach me those truths which I ought to teach her.

When I thought of her youth, I blushed to think how superior she was to what I well remembered myself to have been at the same age : nay, how far my superior at that very time. I earnestly desired to catch something of the spirit which appeared so lovely in her : for, simple, teachable, meek, humble, yet earnest in her demeanor, she bore living marks of heavenly teaching.

'The Lord,' thought I, "has called this little child, and set her in the midst of us, as a parable, a pattern, an emblem. And he saith, 'Verily, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' O ! that I may be humble as this little child !"

I was thus led into a deep self ex-

amination, and was severely exercised with fear and apprehension, whether I was myself a real partaker of those divine influences which I could so evidently discover in her. Sin appeared to me just then to be more than ever "exceeding sinful." Inward and inbred corruptions made me tremble. The danger of self-deception in so great a matter alarmed me—I was a teacher of others : but was I indeed spiritually taught myself ?

A spirit of anxious inquiry ran thro' every thought : I looked at the manifold works of creation around me ; I perceived the greatest marks of regularity and order ; but *within* I felt confusion and disorder.

'The waves of the sea,' thought I, 'ebb and flow in exact obedience to the laws of their Creator—Thus far they come, and no farther—they retire again to their accustomed bounds ; and so maintain a regulated succession of effect.'

'But alas ! the waves of passion and affection in the human breast, manifest more of the wild confusion of a storm, than the orderly regularity of a tide—Grace can alone subdue them.'

'What peaceful harmony subsists throughout all this lovely landscape ! These majestic cliffs, some clothed with trees and shrubs ; others bare and unadorned with herbage, yet variegated with many coloured earths ; these are not only sublime and delightful to behold, , but they are answering the end of their creation, and serve as a barrier to stop the progress of the waves.'

'But how little peace and harmony can I comparatively see in my own heart ! The landscape *within* is marred by dreary barren wilds, and wants that engaging character which the various parts of this prospect before me so happily preserve. Sin, sin is the bane of mortality, and heaps confusion upon confusion, wherever it prevails.'

‘Yet, saith the voice of promise, Sin shall not have dominion over you — O! then ‘may I yield myself unto God, as one that am alive from the dead, and my members as instruments of righteousness unto God’ — And thus may I become an able and willing Minister of the New Testament!

‘I wish I were like this little stream of water — It takes its first rise scarcely a mile off; yet it has done good even in that short course. It has passed by several cottages in its way, and afforded life and health to the inhabitants — it has watered their little gardens as it flows, and enriched the meadows near its banks. It has satisfied the thirst of the flocks that are feeding aloft on the hills, and perhaps refreshed the shepherd’s boy who sits watching his master’s sheep hard by. It then quietly finishes its current in this secluded dell, and, agreeably to the designs of its Creator, quickly vanishes in the ocean.

‘May my course be like unto thine, thou little rivulet! Though short be my span of life, yet may I be useful to my fellow-sinners as I travel onwards! Let me be a dispenser of spiritual support and health to many! Like this stream may I prove the poor man’s friend by the way, and water the souls that thirst for the river of life wherever I meet them! — And, if it pleases thee, O my God! let me in my latter end be like this brook. It calmly, though not quite silently, flows through this scene of peace and loveliness just before it enters the sea. Let me thus gently close my days likewise; and may I usefully tell to others of the goodness and mercy of my Saviour, till I arrive at the vast ocean of eternity.

‘Thither,’ thought I, ‘little Jane is fast hastening. Short, but not useless has been *her* course, I feel the great importance of it in my own soul at this moment. I view a work

of mercy *there*, to which I do hope I am not quite a stranger in the experience of my own heart. The thought enlivens my spirit, and leads me to see, that, great as is the power of sin, the power of Jesus is greater: and through grace I *may* meet my dear young disciple, my child in the Gospel, my sister in the faith, in a brighter, a better world hereafter.’

There was something in the whole of this meditation which calmed and prepared my mind for my promised visit the next day. I looked forward to it with affectionate anxiety.

It was now time to return homewards. The sun was setting. The lengthened shadows of the cliffs, and of the hills towering again far above them, cast a brown but not unpleasant tint over the waters of the bay. — Farther on, the beams of the sun still maintained their splendor — Some of the sails of the distant ships, enlivened by its rays, appeared like white spots in the blue horizon, and seemed to attract my notice, as if to claim at least the passing prayer, ‘God speed the mariners on their voyage!’

I quitted my retreat in the cliff with some reluctance; but with a state of mind, as I hoped, solemnized by reflection, and animated to fresh exertion.

I walked up by a steep pathway that winded through trees and shrubs on the sides of one of the precipices. At every step the extent of prospect enlarged, and acquired a new and varying character by being seen through the trees on each side. — Climbing up a kind of rude inartificial set of stone stairs in the bank, I passed by the singularly-situated cottages which I had viewed from beneath; received and returned the evening salutation of the inhabitants, sitting at their doors, and just come home from labour; till I arrived at the top of the precipice, where I had left my horse tied to a gate.

Could *he* have enjoyed it, he had a noble prospect around him in every direction from this elevated point of view, where he had been stationed while I was on the shore below. But wherein he most probably failed, I think his rider did not. The landscape, taken in connection with my recent train of thought about myself and little Jane, inspired devotion.

The sun was now set;—the bright colours of the western clouds faintly reflected from the south eastern hills, that were unseen from my retreat in the cliff, or only perceived by their evening shadows on the sea, now added to the beauty of the prospect on the south and west. Every element contributed to the interesting effect of the scenery. The *earth* was diversified in shape and ornament.—The *waters* of the ocean presented a noble feature in the landscape. The *air* was serene, or only ruffled by a refreshing breeze from the shore.—And the sun's *fiery* beams, though departing for the night, still preserved such a portion of light and warmth as rendered all the rest delightful to an evening traveller. From this point the abyss, occasioned by the great fissure in the cliff, appeared grand and interesting. Trees hung over it on each side, projecting not only their branches, but many of their roots, in wild and fantastic forms. Masses of earth had recently fallen from the upper to the lower parts of the precipice, carrying trees and plants down the steep descent. The character of the soil, and unceasing influence of the stream at the bottom, seemed to threaten farther slips of the land from the summit.

From hence the gentle murmur of the cascade at the head of the chine stole upon the ear without much interruption to the quietness of the scene.

A fine rocky cliff, half buried in trees, stood erect on the land side, about a mile distant, and seemed to

vie with those on the shore, in challenging the passenger's attention.

In the distance stood a noble ash-tree, which, on a considerable height, majestically reigned as the patriarch of the grove near which it grew.

Every object combined to please the eye, and direct the traveller's heart to admire and love the Author and Creator of all that is beautiful to sense, and edifying to the soul.

The next morning I went to Jane's cottage. On entering the door, the woman who so frequently visited her met me, and said:

'Perhaps, Sir, you will not wake her just yet; for she has dropped asleep, and she seldom gets much rest, poor girl.'

I went gently up stairs.

The child was in a half sitting posture, leaning her head upon her right hand, with her Bible open before her. She had evidently fallen asleep while reading. Her countenance was beautifully composed and tranquil. A few tears had rolled down her cheek, and (probably unknown to her) dropped upon the pages of her book.

I looked around me for a moment. The room was outwardly comfortless and uninviting; the walls out of repair; the sloping roof something shattered; the floor broken and uneven; no furniture but two tottering bedsteads, a three-legged stool, and an old oak chest—the window broken in many places, and mended with patches of paper. A little shelf against the wall, over the bedstead where Jane lay, served for her physic, her food, and her books.

'Yet *here*,' I said to myself, 'lies an heir of glory, waiting for a happy dismissal. Her earthly home is poor indeed: but she has a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. She has little to attach her to this world; but what a weight of glory in the world to come! This mean despised chamber is a palace in

the eye of faith, for it contains one that is an inheritor of a crown.'

I approached without waking her, and observed that she had been reading the twenty-third chapter of St. Luke. The finger of her left hand lay upon the book, pointing to the words, as if she had been using it to guide her eye whilst she read.

I looked at the place, and was pleased at the apparently casual circumstance of her finger pointing at these words:

'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.'

'Is this casual or designed?' thought I—'Either way it is remarkable.'

But, in another moment, I discovered that her finger was *indeed* an index to the thoughts of her heart.

She *half* awoke from her dozing state, but not sufficiently so to perceive that any person was present: and said, in a kind of a whisper,

'Lord, remember me—Remember me—Remember—Remember a poor child—Lord remember me—'

She then suddenly started, and perceived me, as she became fully awake—a faint blush overspread her cheeks for a moment, and then disappeared.

'Dame K——, how long have I been asleep?—Sir, I am very sorry—'

'And I am very glad to find you thus,' I replied: 'you may say with David, 'I laid me down and slept: I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' What were you reading?'

'The history of the crucifying of Jesus, Sir.'

'How far had you read when you fell asleep?'

'To the prayer of the thief that was crucified with him; and when I came to that place, I stopped, and thought what a mercy it would be, if the Lord Jesus should remember me likewise—and so I fell asleep, and I fancied in my dream that I saw

Christ upon the cross; and I thought I said, 'Lord, remember me'—and I am sure he did not look angry upon me—and then I awoke.'

All this seemed to be a sweet commentary on the text, and a most suitable forerunner of our intended sacramental service.

'Well, my dear child, I am come, as you wished me, to administer the sacrament of the body and blood of our blessed Saviour to you; and I dare say neighbour K—— will be glad to join us.'

'Talk to me a little about it first, Sir, if you please.'

'You remember what you have learned in your Catechism about it—Let us consider—A sacrament, you know, is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.' Now the Lord has ordained bread and wine in the holy Supper, as the outward mark which we behold with our eyes. It is a sign, a token, a seal of his love, grace, and blessing, which he promises to, and bestows on all who receive it, rightly believing on his name and work.—He, in this manner, preserves amongst us 'a continual remembrance of his death, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.'

'What do you believe respecting the death of Christ, Jenny?'

'That because he died, Sir, we live.'

'What life do we live thereby?'

'The life of grace and mercy now, and the life of glory and happiness hereafter: is it not, Sir?'

'Yes, assuredly; this is the fruit of the death of Christ: and thus he 'opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.' As bread and wine strengthen and refresh your poor weak fainting body in this very sickness; so does the blessing of his body and blood strengthen and refresh the

souls of all that repose their faith, hope and affections on Him who loved us and gave himself for us?

Tears ran down her cheeks, as she said, "O! what a Saviour!—O! what a sinner!—How kind—how good!—And is this for me?"

'Fear not, dear child: He that has made you to love him thus, loves you too well to deny you. He will in no wise cast out any that come to him.'

'Sir,' said the girl, 'I can never think about Jesus, and his love to sinners, without wondering how it can be. I deserve nothing but his anger on account of my sins. Why then does he love me—My heart is evil—Why then does he love me?—I continually forget all his goodness—Why then does he love me?—I neither pray to him, nor thank him, nor do any thing as I ought to do. Why then such love to me?'

'How plain it is that all is mercy from first to last! and that sweetens the blessing, my child. Are you not willing to give Christ all the honor of your salvation, and to take all the blame of your sins on your own self?'

'Yes, indeed, Sir, I am. My hymn says,

Blest be the Lord that sent his son

To take our flesh and blood:

He for our lives gave up his own,

To make our peace with God.

He honour'd all his Father's laws,

Which we have disobey'd;

He bore our sins upon the cross,

And our full ransom paid.'

'I am glad you remember your hymns so well, Jenny.'

'Sir, you don't know what pleasure they give me. I am very glad you gave me that little book of Hymns for children.'

A severe fit of coughing interrupted her speech for a while. The woman held her head. It was distressing to observe her struggle for breath, and almost, as it were, for life.

'Poor dear!' said the woman, 'I wish I could help thee, and ease thy pains: but they will not last forever.'

'God helps me,' said the girl, recovering her breath: 'God helps me; he will carry me through,—Sir, you look frightened—I am not afraid—this is nothing—I am better now.—Thank you, dame, thank you. I am very troublesome; but the Lord will bless you for this and all your kindness to me: yes, Sir, and yours too. Now talk to me again about the Sacrament.'

'What is required, Jenny, of them who come to the Lord's supper?—There are five things named in the Catechism—do you remember what is the first?'

She paused; and then said, with a solemn and intelligent look,

'To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins.'

'I hope and think that you know what this means, Jenny: the Lord has given you the spirit of repentance.'

'No one knows, Sir, what the thoughts of past sin have been to me. Yes, the Lord knows, and that is enough; and I hope he forgives me for Christ's sake. His blood cleanseth from all sin. Sir, I sometimes think of my sins till I tremble, and it makes me cry to think that I have offended such a God; and then he comforts me again with sweet thoughts about Christ.'

'It is well, my child—be it so—The next thing mentioned in that answer of your Catechism, what is it?'

Steadfastly purposing to lead a new life.

'And what do you think of that?'

‘My life, Sir, will be a short one; and I wish it had been a better one — But from my heart I desire that it may be a *new* one for the time to come. I want to forsake all my evil ways and thoughts, and evil words, and evil companions; and to do what God bids me, and what you tell me is right, Sir, and what I read of in my Bible. But I am afraid I do not, my heart is so full of sin. However, Sir, I pray to God to help me. My days will be few; but I wish they may be spent to the glory of God.’

‘The blessing of the Lord be upon you, Jane; so that, whether you live, you may live to the Lord; or whether you die, you may die unto the Lord: and that, living or dying, you may be the Lord’s. What is the next thing mentioned?’

‘To have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, Sir.’

‘Do you believe that God is merciful to you in the pardon of your sins?’

‘I do, Sir,’ said the child, earnestly.

‘And if he pardons you, is it for your own sake, Jenny?’

‘No, Sir, no; it is for Christ’s sake, for my Saviour Jesus Christ’s sake, and that only—Christ is all.’

‘Can you trust him?’

‘Sir, I must not mistrust him; nor would I, if I might.’

‘Right, child; he is worthy of all your trust.’

‘And then, Sir, I am to have a thankful remembrance of his death. I can never think of his dying, but I think also what a poor unworthy creature I am; and yet he is so good to me. I wish I *could* thank him—Sir, I have been reading about his death. How could the people do as they did to him?—but it was all for our salvation. And then the thief on the cross—that is beautiful. I hope he will remember me too, and that I shall always remember him and his death most thankfully.’

‘And lastly, Jenny, are you in charity with all men? Do you forgive all that have offended you? Do you bear ill-will in your heart to any body?’

‘Dear Sir! no; how can I? if God is so good to me, if he forgives me, how can I help forgiving others? There is not a person in all the world, I think, Sir, to whom I do not wish well for Christ’s sake, and that from the bottom of my heart.’

‘How do you feel in regard to those bold, wanton, ill-tempered girls at the next door, who jeer and mock you so about your religion?’

‘Sir, the worst thing I wish them is that God may give them grace to repent; that he may change their hearts, and pardon all their wicked ways and words. May he forgive them as I do wish all my soul!’

She ceased—I wished to ask no more. My heart was full. ‘Can this be the religion of a child?’ thought I; ‘O that we were all children like her!’

‘Reach me that prayer-book, and the cup and plate. My dear friends, I will now, with God’s blessing, partake with you in the holy communion of our Lord’s body and blood.’

The time was sweet and solemn.—I went through the sacramental service.

The countenance and manner of the child evinced powerful feelings.—Tears mingled with smiles; resignation brightened by hope; humility animated by faith; child-like modesty adorned with the understanding of a riper age; gratitude, peace, devotion, patience—all these were visible. I thought I distinctly saw them all—and did I alone see them? Is it too much to say that other created beings, whom I could not behold with my natural eyes, were witnesses of the scene?

If ministering angels do ascend and descend with glad tidings between

earth and heaven, I think they did so then.

When I had concluded the service, I said, 'Now, my dear Jane, you are indeed become a sister in the Church of Christ. May his spirit and blessing rest upon you—strengthen and refresh you !'

'My mercies are great, very great, Sir, greater than I can express—I thank you for this favour—I thought I was too young—it seemed too much for me to think of: but I am now sure the Lord is good to me, and I hope I have done right.'

'Yes, Jenny; and I trust you are both outwardly and inwardly sealed by the Holy Ghost to the day of redemption.'

'Sir, I shall never forget this day.'

'Neither, I think, shall I.'

'Nor I,' said the good old woman; 'sure the Lord has been in the midst of us three to-day, while we have been gathered together in his name.'

'Sir,' said the child, 'I wish you could speak to my mother when you come again. I am so grieved about her soul; and I am afraid she cares nothing at all about it herself.'

'I hope I shall have an opportunity the next time I come. Farewell, my child.'

'Good bye, Sir, and I thank you for all your kindness to me.'

'Surely,' I thought within myself, as I left the cottage, 'this young bud of grace will bloom beautifully in Paradise. The Lord transplant her thither in his own good time! Yet if it be his will, may she live a little longer, that I may farther profit by her conversation and example.'

Possibly some who peruse these simple records of poor little Jane may wish the same. If it be so, we will visit her again before she departs hence, and is no more seen.

To be continued.

EXTRACTS FROM LUTHER'S WRITINGS.
Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Matt. vi. 9, 10.

When God hears us in these three first petitions, he sanctifies his Name in us; he sets up in us his kingdom, and implants in us that grace which begins to make us truly pious. This grace of God in the heart immediately endeavours to do the will of God; but it finds an obstinate and refractory Adam, against which it cries mightily to God, and says, Thy will be done! for grace feels itself surely burdened with an evil nature. When God hears this cry, he comes quickly to the aid of the grace he loves, and advances the kingdom which he has begun in the soul. He enters with earnestness and might into the battle against the Old Adam. He puts upon him every kind of unhappiness; he breaks off all his supports; he annoys and vexes and besets him on every side; that is, he inflicts on him numberless sorrows and crosses. To this end, he employs evil tongues, bad and faithless men, and, where these are not enough, devils, in order that our own will may be subdued with all its sinful affections, and the will of God may be done, that grace may establish its kingdom, and the love and fear of God alone remain in the heart

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